

예수님은 혁명가였는가?

Was Jesus A Revolutionist?

양승훈

**Brief History of Jesus the Revolutionist
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양승훈

경북대 사대를 졸업하고 한국과학기술원에서 반도체 물리학 전공으로 이학석사와 박사학위를 받았다. 일년 동안 한국과학재단 Post Doc.으로 시카고 대학에서 연구하였고 경북대학교 물리교육과 부교수로 재직하면서 기독교대학설립동역회 기획담당으로 사역한 바 있으며 미국 위스콘신 대학에서 과학사를 공부하였고 현재 휘튼대학에서 신학을 공부하고 하고 있다. 저서로는 「신앙과 학문」, 「기독교 세계관」, 「현대과학 정신과 기독교인의 대응」, 「기독교 세계관의 이해와 적용」 등이 있고, 수필집 「낮은자의 평강」이 있다.

초록

18세기 Reimarus 이래 일부 학자들 사이에서는 끊임없이 예수님을 정치적, 사회적 혁명가로 보려는 시도가 계속되어 왔다. 본고에서는 먼저 Brandon 명제라고 알려져 있는 “혁명가 예수”의 略史를 살펴본 후, 혁명가 예수를 주장하는 사람들이 소위 성경적 근거라고 제시하는 (1)예수님의 성전을 깨끗게 하심, (2)갓세마네 동산에서 베드로가 말고의 귀를 벤 사건, (3)예수님에 대한 유대인들의 고소내용, (4)예수님의 제자 중에 셀롯인 시몬이 있는 점, (5)일부 예수님의 말씀 중에 무장 항쟁을 부추기는 부분 등이 있다는 주장 등을 비판한다. 결론으로 여러 가지 성경적 증거로 볼 때 예수님은 이 땅에 혁명가로 사셨지만 그분의 혁명은 정치적, 사회적 혁명이 아니라 영적, 윤리적 혁명임을 논의한다.

Was Jesus, in His teaching and life, a pacifist or a revolutionist? Or was Jesus preaching violence or nonviolence? Today such questions are being asked and answers given of all sorts. Then what is the definition of "violence"? Here we begin with Edwards' definition based on usage: "Violence is physical force resulting in injury or destruction of properties of persons in violation of general moral belief or civil law." Some would argue that there are other kinds of violence, like moral and mental violence, social and institutional violence, environmental violence etc. But here the etymological connection of the term with the Latin *vis* (through *violentia*), meaning physical strength or force, is kept. Of course it also includes its usual morally negative implication. Its connection to the biblical usage explicitly enforces the moral disapproval associated with violence.¹⁾

What is the view of Jesus on such physical violence? Jesus has often been portrayed as a forerunner of modern revolutionary movement. Reconstructions of Jesus as a Jewish guerrilla leader have found some favor in recent years. During the 1960s and 1970s, for example, the so-called Christian Left in the United States arose amid "imperial culture's crisis of credibility during the civil rights movement and the war in Indochina."²⁾ Radical Christian students in the demonstrations, in Korea, during last two

1) George R. Edwards, *Jesus and the Politics of Violence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp.2~3.

2) Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), p.7.

decades, claimed that Jesus too was a revolutionist. Several theologians have been talking increasingly since late 1960s about a "theology of revolution." The World Council of Church has embraced such terminology and forwarded contributions to "liberation movements" in the Third World.³⁾ "Even quite conservative Christians have begun to talk about radical and revolutionary Christianity, allowing at times that Jesus was a revolutionist."⁴⁾

Then We are faced with specific questions like whether or in what ways Jesus was a revolutionist. For the political identity of Jesus, several theologians have made a special study of the Zealots, a Jewish political-action group which led the revolt against Roman rule. In fact, it is not new to portray Jesus against the background of political events and economic conditions in first-century Palestine and to depict Him as a sort of Zealot.

It is inevitable that those who think seriously about God and His action in the world seek to relate all events to Jesus Christ. They want models for living in contemporary world and wish to mould God and Christ relevant to the events consciously or unconsciously. They always seek to shape God in their own image and to meet current needs. Both liberals and conservatives have used the Gospels to quarry materials for a Jesus for their own sake.

Those who see Jesus as a political rebel combine a growing concern in Christianity about the world of politics and economics

3) Edwards, *Jesus and the Politics of Violence*, pp.13~16.

4) John Reumann, "Introduction" in Martin Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971), p.vi.

and the current revolutionary mood. For Bartsch, for example, Jesus was seen against the political-social background of His day and the continuing tasks of Christians today. That Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God as a change of social relationships implies that we follow Him. The way how the Kingdom of God is interpreted is often regarded as a barometer for understanding of Jesus. Bartsch himself presents his argument for a demand for nonviolent pacificism as the basis for Christian witness.⁵⁾

This essay briefly presents the political background at the time of Jesus, especially the Zealot movement, then looks at key passages in the Gospels that seem to support the revolutionist, title. After criticizing the arguments for the Jesus the Revolutionist. I will try to show that Jesus' ethical system was revolutionary, but His political actions were not.

Brief History of Jesus the Revolutionist

Portraits of Jesus as a revolutionist are certainly not new. Already in the 18th century, Reimarus, the founder of critical research into the life of Jesus, depicted Jesus as a political rebel.⁶⁾

5) Hans-Werner Bartsch, "Brethren Life and Thought," Winter, 1968; Reprinted in *New Theology*, No. 6[1969]: 185-198.

6) Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Reimarus: Fragments*, ed. by Charles H. Talbert, tr. by Ralph S. Fraser (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1970); Or *The Goal of Jesus and His Disciples* (*Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Junger*), tr. by George W. Buchanan (Leiden: Brill, 1970). Reimarus's views was cited in Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, tr. by W. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 13-26.

Kautsky, a socialist, entitled his chapter on Jesus, "Concerning the Rebelliousness of Jesus." Kautsky said, "The assumption that the execution of Jesus was brought about through an (armed) rebellion is therefore not only the one which alone makes comprehensible the accounts of the gospels, it also fits fully into the character of the time and of that region."⁷⁾ Wellhausen also believed that Jesus sought freedom "from the yoke of hierocracy and nomocracy. For this purpose he perhaps did not act merely as a teacher but also as an agitator, and inwardly laid claim for himself to messianic authority to rule, or at least gave the appearance of doing so. During the cleansing of the temple he did not hesitate to use violence; his disciples had weapons and tried to fight when they were taken by surprise..."⁸⁾

Before and after the the World War I and the Russian Revolution, Christian socialists and radicals portrayed Jesus as a social reformer or even a revolutionist. At this time the social gospel, the history-of-religions approach and Marxist theory inspired a considerable emphasis on economics and politics as the background for the arguments. "Apocalyptic was said to be born of economic crisis and hopelessness" and "the messianic hope was traced to political conditions which men could no longer bear." Jesus was regarded as a social idealist, or at times as a rebel or

7)Karl Kautsky, "Concerning the Rebelliousness of Jesus"("Vom Rebellentum Jesu") *Foundations of Christianity (Der Ursprung des Christentums)*, 1908), tr. by H. F. Mins (New York: S. A. Russel, 1953), p.390.

8)Julius Wellhausen, *Introduction to the three first Gospels (Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien)* (Berlin: Reimer, 1911), p.83. It was cited by Hengel, p.4.

revolutionist.⁹⁾

Grant examined the economic background of the Gospels and particularly of Jesus and found that such economic factors as over-population, declining productivity of the soil in Palestine, and a dual civil and religious system of taxation contributed to socio-economic instability and so to the nurture of messianism. But he concluded Jesus was little concerned with secular politics nor social revolution.¹⁰⁾

After Grant, *Jesus the Revolutionist* was revived by Eisler from his study of Josephus. Eisler, a Jewish history-of-religions expert and a Josephus scholar, published a book which became the source of the subsequent notions about Jesus as a revolutionist. Eisler came to the conclusion that "Jesus was a political revolutionist of apocalyptic stamp, who attempted an uprising in Jerusalem and was taken captive and put to death by the Romans."¹¹⁾ Although there were several sharp criticism, Eisler's thesis which sought to explain Jesus along political lines has been popularized since the beginning of the sixties.

Among those who followed Eisler, Brandon is the most noted figure who undertook the same task in his *Jesus and the Zealots*, which was commented by Morris: "it is the standard text for any Christian trying to make sense of the revolutions of our time, even

9)Reumann, "Introduction," p.x.

10)F. C. Grant, *The Economic Background of the Gospels*(New York: Oxford University Press, 1926).

11)Robert Eisler, *Jesus Basileus ou basileusas*(*Jesus, a King Not Ruling*)(Heidelberg: Carl Winter) Vol.1, 1929; Vol. 2, 1930. It was cited in Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* p.4.

though the Professor does not stray by so much as a page out of the world of Jesus' time.¹²⁾ Discussing Eisler's theories in detail, Brandon sees Jesus sympathetic to the Zealots, condemned for political reasons.¹³⁾ He emphasized the importance of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 as a significant turning point in early Christianity.¹⁴⁾ According to Brandon, the early Palestinian church had a close tie with the Zealots and participated in the Jewish war against Rome A.D. 66~70. As a result of the war, the Zealots suffered its termination with the destruction of Jerusalem.¹⁵⁾ In this book, Brandon emphasized Jesus' pro-Zealot attitude and portrayed Him as a socio-political revolutionist who was crucified by Pontius Pilate as an insurrectionist.¹⁶⁾

Jesus' connections with the Zealots also has been pointed out by Cullmann. Simon, a Cananaean and one of Jesus' disciples, was plainly a Zealot at Luke 6:15. Cullmann thinks that if origin of "Bar-Jona" from an Akkadian word meaning "terrorist" is

12) Colin Morris, *Unyoung, Uncoloured, Unpoor* (London: Epworth, 1969), pp.119~20.

13) S. G. F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church: A Study of the Effects of the Jewish Overthrow of A.D. 70 on Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1951; 2nd edition, 1957) pp.13, 115~122; *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (New York: Scribner's, 1968).

14) S. G. F. Brandon, *Religion in Ancient History: Studies in Ideas, Men and Events* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), pp.282~297.

15) For a good discussion of this topic, see Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*.

16) This is the so-called Brandon's thesis in *Jesus and the Zealots*. For a detailed assessment of the Brandon thesis, see Edwards, *Jesus and the Politics of Violence*, pp. 22~30.

accepted, Simon Peter was also a Zealot. But later Cullmann tried to restate his position more carefully so as to disengage Jesus from any suspicious connection with the Zealots. He insisted that Jesus was not a radical of this world as the Zealots were, but an "eschatological radical."¹⁷⁾

As Hengel pointed out, any theory arguing Jesus' connection with revolutionist comes from one-sided interpretation of the sources. Although there was an explicit revolutionary movement in Judaism in the days of Jesus, it was a product of left-wing Pharisaism, motivated by expectation that the Kingdom of God would soon break in violently and great zeal for observing the law. Although there were in some points similarities between Jesus' position and the Zealots', the basic differences between Jesus and the Zealots on fundamental issues are even numerous and quite profound. The evidence indicates that Jesus was hated by the Zealots as much as by the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The teachings and actions of Jesus were viewed by both the right-wing and the left-wing extremes of Judaism as provocative.¹⁸⁾

Arguments for Jesus the Revolutionist

Then what is the ground for Jesus the Revolutionist? In fact the teachings during the Judean and Perean ministries provide little evidence for the revolutionist model. So the scholars in the Jesus

17)Oscar Cullmann, *Jesus and the Revolutionaries*, p.67.

18)Martin Hengel, "Six Theses," *EvKomm* 2(1969): 694~6. It was cited in Reumann, "Introduction."

the Revolutionist camp pursue to get evidences from the events during the last days of Jesus in Jerusalem. Brandon seeks the impetus from the Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and a provocative challenge to the Jewish leaders and the Romans.

The first major event is Jesus' cleansing of the temple.¹⁹⁾ According to Brandon, the Jesus' assault on the temple was assisted by His disciples and peoples and surely followed by bloodshed and devastation.²⁰⁾ Moreover, Eisler added, "even if the attack against the bankers did not, certainly the attack against the cattle-dealers did, cost human life. There is no ox-driver in the whole world who would allow his herd or his herdsman to be driven from the market, without drawing his knife and beginning to stab."²¹⁾

The second is a Zealot revolt which occurred apparently at the instigation of Jesus. Jerusalem experienced the revolt, during which Barabbas and the "insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising" (Mk.15:17) were taken into custody.²²⁾ During the revolt Jesus could not remain in the temple and so withdrew with his disciples. He reckoned with an armed confrontation and therefore urged his disciples, "If you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one"(Lk.22:36b).

19)For the deatiled analysis of the cleansing of the temple, see Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, pp. 299~304.

20)Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, p. 255.

21)Eisler, *Iesous Basileus ou basileusas*, Vol.2, p. 515.

22)In my biblical citations I stay close to the text of the NIV(New International Version) except where otherwise indicated.

The third is an armed resistance in Gethsemane. According to Brandon, although the extent of the conflict can no longer be more precisely determined, the disciples offered appropriate armed resistance.²³⁾ Brandon interpreted “guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priest and Pharisees” in John 18:3 as following: when Jesus was arrested, the Roman cohort with its tribunes also took part along with the temple police.²⁴⁾

Finally, Jesus the Revolutionist thesis was argued from the accusations of Jewish leaders and Pilate.²⁵⁾ After arresting, Jesus was accused of His attack upon the temple and His messianic claims by Jews.²⁶⁾ Jesus was delivered over to Pilate, with the accusation, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king”(Lk.23:2). Jews insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching”(Lk.23:5).

Criticism of Jesus the Revolutionist

The arguments above are quite impressive and apparently self-consistent. But they have some serious problems.

Above all, the first criticism comes from the Jesus' cleansing of the temple, the key witness for the representation of Jesus as a

23) Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, pp. 306ff., 324, 340ff.

24) Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, pp. 1~10, 334ff.

25) For critical analysis of Jesus' arrest and trial by the powers in Mark 14:1~15:20, see Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, pp.354~382.

26) Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, p. 348.

political revolutionary. Christian nationalists would easily escalate “the ‘whip’ of Jesus into the most sophisticated weapons of mass destruction and joined to the righteous wrath that inspires ‘holy war’.”²⁷⁾ In view of the christological interests, however, Westcott was probably correct in his comment that the “whip” in John 2:15 is a symbol of messianic authority.²⁸⁾ The cleansing of the temple was not a matter of driving out all merchants and money-exchangers, because “such an action would not have been possible without a large contingent of troops and a corresponding general riot, and would inevitably have led to intervention on the part of the temple guards and Romans.” Rather, it was “a demonstrative condemnation” of their business and a condemnation against the ruling temple aristocracy, which profited from the business.²⁹⁾

Some assume that the central element in this event is not the action, but the word, because such a mere action would not be meaningful by itself.³⁰⁾ An example is the Jesus’ quotation of Jeremiah’s temple speech (Jer.7:11) in Mark 11:17b, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?’ But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’” The centrality of the word could not call forth physical intervention of the temple police or Roman soldiers. But as shown in Mark 11:18, it did make the chief priests and teachers of the law begin “looking for a way to

27) Edwards, *Jesus and the Politics of Violence*, p.67.

28) B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* volume I (London: John Murray, 1908), p. 91.

29) Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* pp.15~19.

30) See the foot note 55 in Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* p.17.

kill him" (Mk.11:18).

The next event to be noted is the sword thrust of Peter in Gethsemane. Unlike some scholars' interpretation of organized armed resistance, it is basically an evidence that there was no meaningful, organized armed resistance. If there were an actual organized confrontation of the disciples, it would result in much more serious situation. Since it was an inadvertent accident, the disciples could flee without being arrested. The trial which followed related only to Jesus. In spite of the sword attack, the disciples, even Peter, were not further chased. They remained unpunished. It would never be possible in the case of an organized armed resistance.³¹⁾

Third, the sources that have been employed for Jesus the revolutionist have been very selectively treated in a one-sided way. They never seriously dealt the Pilate's announcement, "I found no basis for a charge against this man" (Lk.23:4). For this criticism, Brandon argued that all Gospels, which originated only after A.D.70, falsified the older traditions in a pacifist direction in order to cover up the revolutionary origin of Christianity.³²⁾ But the concealment was not perfect and traces of original revolutionary proclamation of Jesus can still be detected in the Gospels: for example, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Mt.10:34).³³⁾

31)Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* p.18.

32)Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*, chs.10~12, pp.185~243; *Jesus and the Zealots*, chs.5~6, pp.221~321.

33)Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, p.202f., 321.

But Brandon did not present persuasive evidence for the reconstruction of older revolutionary tradition of Gospels and moreover here also he was not escaped from the selective quotation of the text. Immediately after the passage quoted above, Jesus said, "I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law a man's enemies will be the members of his own household"(Mt.10:35-36). The Kingdom of God is not directly created through the message of Jesus. Rather God's call to decision forces one to take a position and thus generates split, conflict, and even persecution, right in the midst of families. What Jesus said here was explicitly intended to increase not the hostility of social and political dimension, but personal and spiritual dimension. It has nothing to do with the sacred, messianic war of the Zealots.

Fourth, the misinterpretation of the Scripture often comes from insufficient understanding of the contemporary Jewish society and customs. An example is the Lukan farewell address in Luke 22:35 ~38. Jesus said to his disciples, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one"(Lk. 22:36). From its context, this saying is directed to the disciples with reference to the period after the death of Jesus. Unlike the seventy-two who were sent forth without a purse or bag or sandals(Lk. 10:4), the disciples are no longer to be sent unequipped. Rather they were ordered to be well-equipped with everything, purse, bag and even sword. Can we really seek the image of Jesus as the revolutionary Redeemer?

According to Hengel, the dagger or short sword was a required

equipment of the Jewish traveler as protection from robbers and wild animals.³⁴⁾ Even the pacifist Essenes who carried nothing on their trips took along weapons on account of robbers.³⁵⁾ Rabbi Hyrcanus justifies the carrying of weapons even on the sabbath, for the weapon was a man's ornamentation.³⁶⁾ Therefore, the equipment of the disciples with sword is to explained from this widespread Jewish custom. In any case cannot we see in it a demand for armed revolt.

Fifth, Brandon misinterpreted some Jesus' teachings. In the interpretation of the beatitudes at Matthew 5:3~11, for example, Brandon mentioned only commendation for the poor, the hungry and thirsty, and those who weep, and then a series of woes against the rich, those who are full, and those who laugh now. He views the beatitudes from a sort of "class struggle."³⁷⁾ From the context, however, it is in a spiritualizing-pacifist manner to bless the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted because of righteousness. Moreover, the blessings and rewards to them are also essentially spiritual. From the blessings like the possession of the kingdom of heaven and the earth(cf. not land), being comforted, filled and shown mercy, seeing God, being sons of God, it is hard to find any social and political allusions.

34)Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* p.21.

35)Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2. 125(2. 8. 4.).

36)Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, *Shabbath* 6.4 (*The Mishnah*, tr. by Herbert Danby (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), p.105 .

37)Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, pp.308f.

The saying of the Emmaeus disciples in Luke 24:21, “we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel” and the asking of disciples after Easter in Acts 1:6, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” are not enough to deduce Jesus the Revolutionist argument.³⁸⁾ It is just reflecting the general contemporary Jewish messianic tradition, not the exclusive expectation of the early Jewish Christian community. The anecdote about the rich young ruler and the attached saying about the eye of the needle(Mk. 10:17~25) do not mean to completely exclude the rich from the reign of God, but warn the danger of the excessive love for mammon and teach the omnipotence of God.

Finally, the fact that a Cananaean Simon with the surname “the Zealot” was among the disciples of Jesus does not provide enough ground for the necessary tie of Jesus with the Zealots.³⁹⁾ Brandon pointed that Simon remained an active member of the Zealot movement even after becoming disciple of Jesus and the surname remained deliberately untranslated for apologetic reasons.⁴⁰⁾ The argument that Simon remained an active member of the Zealot movement even after becoming disciple of Jesus does not get any support of the Scripture. The Zealots were one of major groups in Jesus’ day, which gathered nationalistic and radical Jews.⁴¹⁾ So it is not difficult to imagine the possibility that there would be

38) Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, pp.18, 19.

39) Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, pp. 16, 42f., 243ff., 344, 355f.

40) Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, p. 201.

41) For important religious and political groups of Jesus’ day, see Richard J. Cassidy, “Five Jewish Groups,” *Jesus, Politics, and Society: A Study of Luke’s Gospel* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978), p.114~127.

several Zealots who were attracted by the fresh and profound teachings of Jesus. But deliberate attachment of the surname "Zealot" to Simon implies that he was the only Zealot among the disciples of Jesus. Others were not connected to the Zealot movement. Even Matthew, a tax-collector and a collaborator of the Romans, who was most hated by the Zealots, was among the disciples. Therefore Simon the Zealot did not characterize the ministry of Jesus, but just represent the various background of the disciples.

Jesus' Teaching and Actions

As an itinerant preacher and a charismatic healer, the message of Jesus was concerned with the nearness and the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God, already being in His acts.⁴²⁾ Unlike the Zealots who attempted to force the imminent reign of God through armed confrontation, Jesus did consistently alleviate the oppressed and alienated and bound up their wounds. His social teaching lacks the characteristic Zealot elements. He piercingly charged the hardness and greed of the rich landowners, because people can not serve God and mammon(Mt.6:24). But Jesus' message was essentially not social and political, but theocentric. He did not proclaim a class struggle or liberation war, because basically His message started from the love for God in heaven and people in the world. Then, what kind of the teaching and actions of Jesus shows theocentric orientation of His ministry against human politics?

42)cf. Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20.

Above all, the heart of Jesus' proclamation of conscious rejection of violence is shown in Luke 6:27~36: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you..."(Lk.6:27~36). The principle of love is really revolutionary, not in political and social but in ethical and spiritual senses. Jesus' way was founded upon non-violent and personal appeal and patient persuasion which directed primarily to person's conscience. So He sought inner agreement, not forced acceptance followed by violence. We cannot find any trace of the Zealot fanaticism, "which under the guise of lofty goals despises the face of the neighbor and in dualistic manner defames and demonizes the other person." Jesus' non-violent way proceeded to His unconditional self-sacrifice.⁴³⁾

Jesus' intimate contact with the socially hated group who obtained unjust wealth and collaborated with the Romans provides an example of His action arguing against violence. He did not reject the banquet invitations even from the tax collectors(Mt. 9:9~13). Such an action was a sort of betrayal to the radical revolutionaries. Furthermore, Matthew, one of the tax-collectors, became a disciple!

Another event is Jesus' preaching in Samaria(Jn. 4:4~42) and His parable of the Good Samaritan(Lk. 10:30~37). According to Josephus, under the procurator Coponius(A.D. 6~9) the Samaritans defiled the temple in Jerusalem with human bones.⁴⁴⁾ And under Cumanus(A.D. 48~52) the murder of a Galilean pilgrim (or

43)Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* pp.26~29.

44)Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 18.29f.

pilgrims) on the way to a festival at Jerusalem led to a border war between the Jews and the Samaritans, which the procurator had to quell through the use of troops.⁴⁵⁾ So Jesus' acceptance of Samaritans and the parable of Good Samaritans themselves were not only a severe charge to the priests and the Levites, but an open challenge to all nationalistic Jews who in Jesus' day hated Samaritans more severely than the pagans.

Jesus as a Pacifist is found in His other teachings. For example, even in the case of tempting to use His supernatural power for political purpose, Jesus consciously opposed it (Mt. 4:1~11, Jn.6:15). He understood that true freedom from all dominating can be realized only in self-sacrifice and in non-violence. He had a deep skepticism towards all established social and political power, saying "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves... But I am among you as one who serves"(Lk. 22:25~27).

Throughout His public ministry, Jesus insisted quite consistently that man has no right to judge and avenge in others' affairs. The final verdict in the question of guilt and justice belongs only to God the Judge. Jesus' saying in the case of the woman caught in adultery has fundamental significance in discussing the politics of Jesus: "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her"(Jn. 8:7). Jesus opposed to use violence even in the religiously permitted case. And he stressed that the mea-

45)Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 20.118~36.

sure with which we shall be judged is what we did to our neighbors, saying "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me"(Mt. 25:40).⁴⁶⁾

Accepting God as the final Judge is shown in the Pauline writings. He understood that by judging others man put himself in God's place. He said, "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath." And he quoted the Old Testament: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay"(Deut.32:35); "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head"(Prov. 25:21~22). Paul urges us not to be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good(Rom.12:21). Therefore, the contemporary theologians' arguments for violent revolution is in danger of being overcome by evil, neglecting the essential teaching of Jesus.

Concluding Remarks

Reviewing the church history, numerous errors like crusades, inquisition and religious wars put us on guard against a justification of violent revolution. From the teaching and actions of Jesus and other biblical teaching, we finally understand that there can be no longer be a *bellum justum* ("just war"). Unconditional pacifism was the basic principles of Jesus' teaching and actions. Apparent violence of Jesus in most cases come from insufficient understanding of social and political background or erroneous interpretation

46)On the history of the tradition and the original meaning, see Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, tr. by S. H. Hookes, revised ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1963), pp. 206~210.

of the Scriptures.

Jesus did neither justify nor condemn world power. Unlike the Zealots who did not touch the Roman silver denarius due to the image of Caesar in it, Jesus only called to attention of His opponents to the consequence which comes from their use of Caesar's money. "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's"(Mk.12:17). God's ultimate goal is the establishment of His own Kingdom. Perfect peace and justice will finally come upon the earth when the Prince of Peace has taken up His scepter (Isa. 9:6), when "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15b).⁴⁷⁾ Man's most urgent and basic need is "for the Good news of Salvation, a saving relationship with Jesus Christ." If the priority of personal and spiritual realm is not maintained, our efforts to improve society would be little more than an exercise in self-justification.⁴⁸⁾

But Jesus did not justify the status quo for the sake of personal and spiritual salvation. He broke with the ideological pride of contemporary nationalists and religious leaders. He broke with the sacred Torah and placed it in opposition to the genuine demand of God for human welfare. He opened the Gentiles and the Samaritans the way for participating to the Kingdom of God. But He understood that true salvation is from the freedom not from world power but from inner human pride and sin. Therefore, we can

47)Larry Christenson, *Social Action: Jesus Style* 2nd. edition (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1976), p. 107.

48)Christenson, *Social Action: Jesus Style*, p.90.

quite correctly call Jesus a revolutionary, but His revolution was primarily not in social and political matters but in ethical and spiritual realm.

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With few exceptions, the majority of references on the politics of Jesus was published since the beginning of this century. It is possibly reflecting the strong interaction of Christianity with secular politics, demanding the image of revolutionist Jesus. Present bibliography was compiled from: (1) "References," of Myers' *Binding the Strong Man*; (2) "For Further Reading" of Hengel's *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?*; (3) Prof. Elwell's course synopsis of "The Life and Teaching of Jesus"(BiTh 547); (4) "Bibliography of Works Cited" of Edwards' *Jesus and the Politics of Violence*; (5) Wheaton College Library Search under "Jesus and Politics," "Jesus and Political," "Jesus and Social." For more comprehensive bibliography before 1970, see Myers', Edwards' and Hengel's book.

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